

perspective back, when we think of putting in special types of revisions like this. I would be interested, of course, to have the same thinking that we would do the same things for natural resources, that we will do the same thing for mental health. Those people need help, but this is not the place to put it, in a constitution. We should remember and get our perspective back. The place to do it is through the lawful, the legal way, through the elected representatives of your people working in debate so that they can devise programs, study programs, find the answers to these very complicated questions.

There is no question here that we all want equal opportunity in education for all of our people; but it is a very difficult thing to reach by putting it in the constitution. It could do serious harm in my opinion. If we are going to find the new ideas, if we are going to go into the new era that this constitution can bring, then let us do it, let us reject this clause from the Constitution and let our General Assembly go to work.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Wheatley.

DELEGATE WHEATLEY: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Convention, before yielding time, and I want to clarify this, we have an amendment to offer to section 2, as I indicated in my report, to change the word "provided" to "promote", and with the assurance that this does not mean anything other than the word "promote" as it is commonly understood. At this time I yield five minutes to Delegate Beachley.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Beachley.

DELEGATE BEACHLEY: Mr. Chairman, fellow delegates, there are 142 delegates attending this Convention, and we are all here for the purpose of seriously carrying out our obligations to the people of this State, and as mentioned a while ago, to posterity. For that reason I would like to speak against the amendment that has been presented and speak for the Majority Report, which includes equal opportunities for all.

In reply to what Delegate Lord said a while ago, or mentioned, that it was a radical departure, I would like to state that this proposition of equal opportunity is not a radical departure. It is not an exhortatory expression but a sensible, broad and evolving perspective toward the field of education.

This point of view by the majority is the obligation that the legislatures of Mary-

land have been trying to carry out throughout the years since 1723, when they first presented the proposition that we should have free high schools for all.

It has been carried out by these legislatures up to the present time until it has expanded until the opportunities that are offered are now kindergarten through grade twelve for all.

The statement, equal educational opportunities, expresses a general concept, in order to meet the possible pressures of the future, for who knows what new projects or undertakings the twenty-first century is going to bring. Therefore you cannot spell out exactly what would bring equal opportunities along that line.

Maryland is not a poor State, and can afford to continue expanding its educational opportunities.

Yet, we have in the State of Maryland 15.2 per cent of our families having low income. I ask you why. The answers could be found in this one sentence: probably because of the lack of equal educational and appropriate educational opportunities and also the lack of training in skills, according to young people's abilities.

Our nation has been very much concerned for the past five years or so with the rate of drop-out of students from high school. Maryland has been concerned along with all the other states.

Research indicates that the drop-out rate has been influenced very likely by not having enough equal educational opportunities, but I would like to hasten to add that all of these drop-outs, all of them, were capable of further training if we had been able to give them the opportunity to develop their own abilities. Many of these dropouts are persons of average ability.

Would it not have been better to help those young people than have them panic, drop out of school and take some unskilled job because they think that is just the best bet?

Other research studies indicate that in the State of Maryland, anywhere from five to ten per cent of our high school graduates would like to go on for further education and cannot attend because of financial reasons.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have three-quarters of a minute.

DELEGATE BEACHLEY: I would like to make two points in closing.